

Winter Travel TRACTION ADVISORY

As you travel over the mountain passes, you may encounter the following traction advisory signs:



Traction tires advised – oversize loads prohibited. Oversize vehicles may be restricted from roadways during severe weather conditions.



Traction tires required- Passenger vehicles must use approved traction tires. Chains are required on vehicles over 10,000 gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), including large passenger trucks and SUVs over 10,000 GVWR.



Tire chains required – except four/all wheel drive. In extreme weather conditions, the advisory may indicate chains are required on four/all wheel drive vehicles.

Your Tire and Chain Options

To qualify as traction tires, your tires must have at least an eighth of an inch of tread and be labeled Mud and Snow, M+S, All Season, or have a Mountain/Snowflake symbol. Because different types of winter tires perform best under different road conditions, your local tire dealer can help you select the best option. Remember, tire dealers are busiest before and during winter storms.

Vehicles over 10,000 GVWR, including some larger passenger trucks, SUVs, RVs and vehicle towing trailers, must carry chains Nov. 1 through March 31 on certain state-owned routes. For more information on tires and chains, visit www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter.



Know Before You Go

The WSDOT Communications Team provides the latest road and traffic conditions to the media across the state, and on the WSDOT web site at: www.wsdot.wa.gov.

Winter Information:

Learn about winter travel strategies, weather forecast, chain requirements, and see how WSDOT maintenance crews clear the roads at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/winter

WSDOT Newsroom:

Follow media releases, read the WSDOT blog, sign up for WSDOT's listserv and RSS feeds, see WSDOT pictures on Flickr and videos on YouTube at www.wsdot.wa.gov/news

Highway Cameras:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic

Traffic Alerts and Slowdowns:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts

Mountain Pass Conditions:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/passess

Weather:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/weather

Washington's Tire and Chain Requirements:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/commercialvehicle/chain_req

Road Temperatures:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/roadtemps

Commercial Vehicle Services:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/commercialvehicle

Washington State Patrol:

www.wsp.wa.gov

On Your PDA/Small Screen Device:

Get information on mountain pass road conditions, Seattle traffic and ferry schedules at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/small

On Your Phone:

Call 5-1-1 for travel info, construction updates, and mountain pass conditions. This information is updated frequently.

In Your Vehicle:

Program your radio to 530 AM and 1610 AM before you leave. WSDOT highway message signs and radio advisories offer specific, location-based information.

WASHINGTON WINTER DRIVING



Washington State
Department of Transportation

Highway Snow and Ice Removal

During the winter, WSDOT maintenance crews work around the clock to keep highways drivable and traffic moving by using salt and anti-icing compounds, or sand when temperatures fall too low for chemicals to work. Supervisors check weather reports and move equipment, materials, and personnel where needed most.

WSDOT crews start anti-icing and snow removal on heavily travelled state routes, clearing the far right lanes first. Initial efforts are on areas where drivers are most at risk: hills, curves, ramps, bridges and interchanges. It takes time to complete the work, especially if the storm conditions continue to produce low temperatures, ice, freezing rain and snow.

No one can guarantee ice and snow-free roadways, so motorists must always be cautious when driving in wet and cold weather. **Remember, Ice and Snow, Take it Slow.**



WSDOT's Winter Operations

WSDOT operates seven Traffic Management Centers (TMCs) 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year. In the winter, an additional TMC is added at Snoqualmie Pass. At the TMCs, engineers and dispatchers have the tools and technology to manage and dispatch winter roadway crews where they are needed most. They view traffic cameras, monitor Washington State Patrol radio and post information on the overhead freeway signs, highway advisory radio, and the 5-1-1 travel information line.

During significant and long-term storm events, WSDOT operates several Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) to expedite the movement of resources to areas of critical need, and assist with emergency response.

Safe Winter Travel

Winter conditions call for different driving tactics. **Ice and Snow, Take it Slow** – slower speed, slower acceleration, slower steering, and slower braking. Give yourself extra time to reach your destination safely. It's not worth putting yourself and others in a dangerous situation just to save time.

- Drive with your headlights on.
- Drive for conditions. Don't get overconfident with four-wheel drive. It won't help you stop any faster.
- Winter road conditions often result in longer stopping distances. Drivers should allow additional room between their vehicles and others.
- Slow down when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots. These all have potential to develop black ice that makes driving hazardous.
- Avoid abrupt actions while steering, braking or accelerating to lessen the chances of losing control of the vehicle.
- Look farther ahead in traffic. Actions by other drivers will alert you to problems ahead and give you extra time to react.
- Trucks take longer to stop. Don't cut in front of them.
- Avoid using cruise control or overdrive. Don't let your car make a bad decision for you.
- Stopping on snow and ice requires extra time and distance. If you have anti-lock brakes, press the pedal down firmly and hold it. If you don't have anti-lock brakes, gently pump the pedal. Either way, give yourself plenty of room to stop.



Safe Travel Around Snowplows

Snowplows may need to stop or take evasive action to avoid stranded vehicles and are usually spreading anti-icing materials from the back of the truck. If you find yourself behind a snowplow, stay behind it or use caution when passing. The road behind a snowplow will be safer to drive on.

- Don't crowd the plow. Snowplows plow far and wide - sometimes very wide. The front plow extends several feet in front of the truck and may cross the centerline and shoulders during plowing operations.
- Plows turn and exit the road frequently. Give them plenty of room. Keep a distance of at least 15 car lengths (200 feet).
- On multiple lane roads, watch for snowplows operating in either lane.
- Snowplows can throw up a cloud of snow that can reduce your visibility to zero in less time than you can react. Drive smart. Never drive into a snow cloud - it could conceal a snowplow.
- A snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them but they may not see you.



Use This Handy Checklist to Prepare for the Road

Before leaving home, find out about the driving conditions and prepare your vehicle. Safe drivers know the weather, and they know their limits. If the weather is bad, remember, **Ice and Snow, Take it Slow, or just don't go.**

- Inspect your vehicle:
 - ☐ Battery
 - ☐ Lights
 - ☐ Antifreeze
 - ☐ Defroster
 - ☐ Heater
 - ☐ Belts
 - ☐ Hoses
 - ☐ Filters
 - ☐ Motor oil
 - ☐ Tire pressure
 - ☐ Wiper blades
 - ☐ Windshield fluid
 - ☐ Brakes
 - ☐ Brake fluid
- Keep your gas tank full.
- Stock your car with basic winter safety equipment:
 - ☐ Emergency cash
 - ☐ Small shovel
 - ☐ Tow chain
 - ☐ Scraper and brush
 - ☐ Jumper cables
 - ☐ Bag of sand or cat litter for tire traction
- Carry a break-down kit:
 - ☐ Road flares
 - ☐ Blanket
 - ☐ Gloves
 - ☐ Boots
 - ☐ Warm clothing
 - ☐ Flashlight
 - ☐ Extra batteries
 - ☐ Food
 - ☐ Water
 - ☐ First aid kit
 - ☐ Medications
- Clear snow and ice from all windows and lights - even the hood and roof - before driving.
- Wash your car regularly.

Check Your Route

